

Frequently Asked Questions about H1N1

H1N1 Vaccine Questions

When is the next H1N1 Immunization Clinic in Louisville?

- The Department of Public health and Wellness will hold a walk-in clinic on Saturday November 21 at the Urban Government Center located at 810 Barret Ave.
- The clinic will be held from 10:00 a.m. to 3 p.m. as long as vaccine supply lasts. Those wishing to be vaccinated should enter through the South entrance (Neighborhood Place). No appointments are necessary for this clinic.
- The Department has 3,000 vaccine doses available for this clinic - about 1,500 nasal mist doses and 1,500 injections (shots).
- The nasal flu mist is as effective as the injection and is for people ages 2 to 49 with no underlying health conditions.
- Due to the nationwide limited vaccine, the clinic is for these high-risk groups only:
 - ✓ pregnant women
 - ✓ people who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age
 - ✓ people between the ages of 6 months and 24 years old
 - ✓ people 25 years through 64 years of age with chronic health disorders or compromised immune systems
 - ✓ healthcare workers
 - ✓ emergency first responders
- Children under age 18 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.
- People can help to alleviate clinic waiting time by going to www.louisvilleky.gov/health and downloading and completing the consent form then bringing it to the clinic.

My child is nine years old (or younger) and got the first H1N1 immunization at last week's clinic. Can she get the second shot at Saturday's walk-in clinic?

- No

- Children ages 6 months through 9 years should have two doses of H1N1 vaccine.
- Children must wait at least 28 days after the first H1N1 immunization for the second immunization to be effective.
- We will be announcing opportunities for young children to get their second H1N1 immunization shortly.

What other H1N1 immunization clinics have been held in Louisville?

- Louisville held its first public H1N1 immunizations clinics (drive thru and walk-in) on November 11 and 12 at Papa John's Cardinal Stadium. More than 19,000 people were immunized. These clinics were for those at high risk.
- The Department of Public Health and Wellness has also distributed more than 52,000 doses of H1N1 vaccine to 170 health care providers throughout the community to immunize high-risk patients.
- There will be more opportunities to get H1N1 vaccine in the upcoming weeks. The Department of Public Health and Wellness will be holding more community clinics as more vaccine becomes available.
- The Department of Public Health and Wellness will also hold H1N1 clinics at public, parochial and private schools later this month.

How much will an H1N1 shot in Louisville cost?

- The vaccine itself is free.
- The H1N1 vaccinations at all Louisville Metro Public Health and Wellness sites and in the schools will be free.
- Private providers may be able to charge an administration fee.

Is the vaccine safe?

- Yes.
- The vaccine has been approved by the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) after clinical trials.
- This vaccine was made using the same processes and facilities that are used to make the currently licensed seasonal influenza vaccines.

Who should get the vaccine?

Anyone six months of age or older. There is some evidence that people age 65 and older may have some immunity from H1N1 and are at less priority for an H1N1 shot.

The CDC recommends that certain groups of the population receive the 2009 H1N1 vaccine when it first becomes available. These target groups include:

- pregnant women
- people who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age
- healthcare and emergency medical services personnel
- people between the ages of 6 months and 24 years old
- people ages of 25 through 64 years of age who are at higher risk for 2009 H1N1 because of chronic health disorders or compromised immune systems.

Will there be enough H1N1 vaccine?

We do not expect that there will be a shortage of 2009 H1N1 vaccine, but initially the vaccine may be available in limited quantities. In this setting, the following groups will receive the vaccine before others:

- pregnant women
- people who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age
- health care and emergency medical services personnel
- children 6 months through 4 years of age
- children 5 through 18 years of age who have chronic medical conditions

H1N1 Disease Questions

What are the signs and symptoms of this virus in people?

The symptoms of H1N1 flu are much the same as those of regular seasonal flu. The symptoms of 2009 H1N1 flu virus include:

- fever
- cough
- sore throat
- runny or stuffy nose
- body aches
- headache
- chills

- fatigue
- Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea.
- People may be infected with the flu, including 2009 H1N1 and have respiratory symptoms without a fever.

How serious is H1N1?

While illness with the new H1N1 virus has ranged from mild to severe, the vast majority of people who have been sick have recovered without needing medical treatment. Nonetheless, hospitalizations and even deaths from infection with this virus have occurred.

In seasonal flu, certain people are at “high risk” of serious complications. This includes people 65 years and older, children younger than five years old, pregnant women, and people of any age with certain chronic medical conditions. About 70 percent of people who have been hospitalized with this 2009 H1N1 virus have had one or more medical conditions previously recognized as placing people at “high risk” of serious seasonal flu-related complications. This includes pregnancy, diabetes, heart disease, asthma and kidney disease.

One thing that appears to be different from seasonal influenza is that adults older than 64 years do not yet appear to be at increased risk of 2009 H1N1-related complications thus far.

How does 2009 H1N1 flu compare to seasonal flu in terms of its severity and infection rates?

With seasonal flu, we know that seasons vary in terms of timing, duration and severity. Seasonal influenza can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. Each year, in the United States, on average 36,000 people die from flu-related complications and more than 200,000 people are hospitalized from flu-related causes. Of those hospitalized, 20,000 are children younger than 5 years old. Over 90% of deaths and about 60 percent of hospitalization occur in people older than 65.

H1N1 flu has caused greater disease burden in people younger than 25 years of age than older people. At this time, there are few cases and few deaths reported in people older than 64 years old, which is unusual when compared with seasonal flu. However, pregnancy and other previously recognized high risk medical conditions from seasonal influenza appear to be associated with increased risk of complications from this 2009 H1N1. These underlying conditions include asthma, diabetes, suppressed immune systems, heart disease, kidney disease, neurocognitive and neuromuscular disorders and pregnancy.

How long can an infected person spread this virus to others?

People infected with seasonal and 2009 H1N1 flu shed virus and may be able to infect others from 1 day before getting sick to 5 to 7 days after. This can be longer in some

people, especially children and people with weakened immune systems and in people infected with the new H1N1 virus.

H1N1 and the Schools

Will H1N1 immunizations be available in schools?

- Yes.
- The Metro Health and Wellness Department has made plans make H1N1 shots available to Jefferson County Public School students and to private and parochial students at their schools.
- These immunizations will begin in late November, probably not until after Thanksgiving.
- To get a shot each student will need a permission slip signed by his or her parent.
- The shots will be free.

Will students be required to get H1N1 shots?

- No.
- Getting an H1N1 shot is **not** a requirement for school.
- Students getting an H1N1 shot at school will need to have a permission slip signed by a parent or guardian.

How much will the H1N1 shots at schools cost?

- The shots will be free.

Can the general public get immunizations at the school H1N1 clinics?

- No
- These clinics are for schools students.

Will schools in Jefferson County be closed because of H1N1 cases in the school?

- In most cases no.
- The Department of Public Health and Wellness has been working closely with the Jefferson County Public Schools to plan the most effective means to minimize the effects of H1N1 among school children.
- Current plans include keeping schools open during the flu season unless illness in a critical mass of students or faculty at a particular school makes keeping that school open impractical.

Will the Metro Public Health and Wellness Department send me an advisory if a student at my child's school has H1N1?

- No.
- Following CDC guidelines, Metro Public Health and Wellness is not sending advisories to parents.
- It made sense to send advisories earlier this spring when H1N1 cases were limited to a few places in the community. H1N1 now is so widespread that children are exposed to the H1N1 virus virtually everywhere in the community.
- Sending advisories to parents of students in schools with known H1N1 disease would give parents who do not receive such advisories a false sense of security that their children are not being exposed to the virus.
- Parents of children with underlying medical conditions such as asthma should consult their physician about how to handle the H1N1 flu season.

I found out that there are H1N1 cases at my child's school and no one told me. Why not?

Following CDC guidelines, Metro Public Health and Wellness is not sending advisories to parents. It made sense to send advisories earlier this spring when H1N1 cases were limited to a few places in the community. H1N1 now is so widespread that children are exposed to the H1N1 virus virtually everywhere in the community. Sending advisories to parents of students in schools with known H1N1 disease would give parents who do not receive such advisories a false sense of security that their children are not being exposed to the virus.

Parents of children with underlying medical conditions such as asthma should consult their physician about how to handle the H1N1 flu season.

My child is ill and is showing flu symptoms. What should I do?

- Keep your child home from school for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever, or signs of a fever, without the use of fever-reducing medicines.
- They should stay home even if they are using antiviral drugs.
- Parents of children with underlying medical conditions such as asthma should consult their physician about how to handle the H1N1 flu season.

What is CDC's recommendation regarding "swine flu parties"?

"Swine flu parties" are gatherings during which people have close contact with a person who has 2009 H1N1 flu in order to become infected with the virus. The intent of these parties is for a person to become infected with what for many people has been a mild disease, in the hope of having natural immunity 2009 H1N1 flu virus that might circulate later and cause more severe disease.

CDC does not recommend "swine flu parties" as a way to protect against 2009 H1N1 flu in the future. While the disease seen in the current 2009 H1N1 flu outbreak has been mild for many people, it has been severe and even fatal for others. There is no way to predict with certainty what the outcome will be for an individual or, equally important, for others to whom the intentionally infected person may spread the virus.

CDC recommends that people with 2009 H1N1 flu avoid contact with others as much as possible. If you are sick with flu-like illness, CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.) Stay away from others as much as possible to keep from making others sick.

Prevention and Treatment of H1N1

What can I do to protect myself from getting sick?

Get an H1N1 flu shot as soon as the vaccine becomes available to you. **Take these everyday steps to protect your health:**

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you are sick with flu-like illness, stay home!! CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone and you are no longer taking medication to reduce fever. Keep away from others as much as possible to keep from making others sick.

If I have a family member at home who is sick with 2009 H1N1 flu, should I go to work?

- Employees who are well but who have an ill family member at home with 2009 H1N1 flu can go to work as usual.
- These employees should monitor their health every day, and take everyday precautions including washing their hands often with soap and water, especially after they cough or sneeze. If soap and water are not available, they should use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- If they become ill, they should notify their supervisor and stay home.

Employees who have an underlying medical condition or who are pregnant should call their health care provider for advice, because they might need to receive influenza antiviral drugs to prevent illness.

If I get sick with H1N1, what should I do if I get sick?

- Most people who are not pregnant and who do not have any underlying medical conditions will not need hospitalization or medical care.
- If you have severe illness or you are at high risk for flu complications, contact your health care provider or seek medical care. Your health care provider will determine whether flu testing or treatment is needed.
- Stay home!! CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone and you are no longer taking medication to reduce fever. Keep away from others as much as possible to keep from making others sick. This means avoiding normal activities, including work, school, travel, shopping, social events, and public gatherings.
- If you become ill and experience any of the following warning signs, seek emergency medical care.

In children, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

In adults, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

Are there medicines to treat 2009 H1N1 infection?

Yes. CDC recommends the use of oseltamivir or zanamivir for the treatment and/or prevention of infection with 2009 H1N1 flu virus. Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines (pills, liquid or an inhaled powder) that fight against the flu by keeping flu viruses from reproducing in your body. If you get sick, antiviral drugs can make your illness milder and make you feel better faster. They may also prevent serious flu complications.

During the current pandemic, the priority use for influenza antiviral drugs is to treat severe influenza illness (for example hospitalized patients) and people who are sick who have a condition that places them at high risk for serious flu-related complications.

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Contamination and Cleaning

How long can influenza virus remain viable on objects (such as books and doorknobs)?

Studies have shown that influenza virus can survive on environmental surfaces and can infect a person for 2 to 8 hours after being deposited on the surface.

What kills influenza virus?

Influenza virus is destroyed by heat (167-212°F [75-100°C]). In addition, several chemical germicides, including chlorine, hydrogen peroxide, detergents (soap), iodophors (iodine-based antiseptics), and alcohols are effective against human influenza viruses if used in proper concentration for a sufficient length of time.

What surfaces are most likely to be sources of contamination?

Germs can be spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth. Droplets from a cough or sneeze of an infected person move through the air. Germs can be spread when a person touches

respiratory droplets from another person on a surface like a desk, for example, and then touches their own eyes, mouth or nose before washing their hands.

How should waste disposal be handled to prevent the spread of influenza virus?

To prevent the spread of influenza virus, it is recommended that tissues and other disposable items used by an infected person be thrown in the trash. Additionally, persons should wash their hands with soap and water after touching used tissues and similar waste.

What household cleaning should be done to prevent the spread of influenza virus?

To prevent the spread of influenza virus it is important to keep surfaces (especially bedside tables, surfaces in the bathroom, kitchen counters and toys for children) clean by wiping them down with a household disinfectant according to directions on the product label.

How should linens, eating utensils and dishes of persons infected with influenza virus be handled?

Linens, eating utensils, and dishes belonging to those who are sick do not need to be cleaned separately, but importantly these items should not be shared without washing thoroughly first.

Linens (such as bed sheets and towels) should be washed by using household laundry soap and tumbled dry on a hot setting. Individuals should avoid "hugging" laundry prior to washing it to prevent contaminating themselves. Individuals should wash their hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub immediately after handling dirty laundry.

Eating utensils should be washed either in a dishwasher or by hand with water and soap.

Exposures Not Thought to Spread 2009 H1N1 Flu

Can I get infected with 2009 H1N1 virus from eating or preparing pork?

No. 2009 H1N1 viruses are not spread by food. You cannot get infected with novel H1N1 virus from eating pork or pork products. Eating properly handled and cooked pork products is safe.

Is there a risk from drinking water?

No. Tap water in Louisville that has been treated by conventional disinfection processes, does not likely pose a risk for transmission of influenza viruses. Current drinking water treatment regulations provide a high degree of protection from viruses. No research has been completed on the susceptibility of 2009 H1N1 flu virus to conventional drinking water treatment processes. However, recent studies have demonstrated that free chlorine levels typically used in drinking water treatment are adequate to inactivate highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza. It is likely that other influenza viruses such as 2009 H1N1 would also be similarly inactivated by chlorination. To date, there have been

no documented human cases of influenza caused by exposure to influenza-contaminated drinking water.

Can 2009 H1N1 flu virus be spread through water in swimming pools, spas, water parks, interactive fountains, and other treated recreational water venues?

No. Influenza viruses infect the human upper respiratory tract. There has never been a documented case of influenza virus infection associated with water exposure.

Recreational water that has been treated at CDC recommended disinfectant levels does not likely pose a risk for transmission of influenza viruses. No research has been completed on the susceptibility of 2009 H1N1 influenza virus to chlorine and other disinfectants used in swimming pools, spas, water parks, interactive fountains, and other treated recreational venues. However, recent studies have demonstrated that free chlorine levels recommended by CDC (1–3 parts per million [ppm or mg/L] for pools and 2–5 ppm for spas) are adequate to disinfect avian influenza A (H5N1) virus. It is likely that other influenza viruses such as 2009 H1N1 virus would also be similarly disinfected by chlorine.

Can 2009 H1N1 influenza virus be spread at recreational water venues outside of the water?

Yes, recreational water venues are no different than any other group setting. The spread of this 2009 H1N1 flu is thought to be happening in the same way that seasonal flu spreads. Flu viruses are spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing of people with influenza. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

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